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South Blount Utility District awarded federal funding

MARYVILLE, Tenn., April 19, 2010 — U.S. Rep. John Duncan, Jr. and USDA Rural Development State Director Bobby Goode today announced federal funding of \$769,000 for needed improvements to the South Blount County Utility District (SBUD) water system. The presentation took place at the utility district office.

"Blount County is one of the most popular places to move in the country," said the Congressman. "We don't want them being overwhelmed by growth so RD does a good job helping communities like this prepare for the future."

The Rural Development low-interest loan of \$769,000 and \$75,068 in utility district funds will be used to extend public water service to at least 50 homes, small farms and businesses along two and a half miles of State Route 129 and Old Railroad Bed Road in the Pumpkin Center area near the border of the Cherokee National Forest.

"Safe, reliable water service is fundamental to the economic health of a community," said Goode. "Through partnerships like this one, with Congressman Duncan and the utility district's commissioners we are putting people to work and building a firm foundation for prosperity here in the shadow of the Smoky Mountains."

According to SBUD President Virginia Morton, "Installing these two line extensions will alleviate recurring water quality issues in an area bordering the Cherokee National Forest where more than 88 percent of private wells have been found to be contaminated."

Rural Development community programs finance construction or improvements to essential services like reliable access to clean water, wastewater treatment, healthcare, education, job training and first responder facilities. Loan-guarantees encourage private lenders to expand the availability of affordable financing in rural communities. Direct loans and grants create sound financial opportunities for local governments to meet essential infrastructure needs. Funding for water projects targets areas with populations of less than 10,000.

Others participating in the event included SBUD Commissioners Tom Abbott and Marshall Hurst, Distribution Manager Harold Corum, Assistant Manager Allen Lail, RD Area Director Jerry Amonett and Area Specialist Marisol Torres.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) is designed to jumpstart the nation's economy, create or save millions of jobs and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The Act includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

More information about USDA's Recovery Act efforts is available at www.usda.gov/recovery.

USDA Rural Development invests in jobs, businesses, community infrastructure, homeownership and affordable rental housing in rural communities. Last year Rural Development assisted more than 866,000 Tennessee families and businesses with more than \$619 million in financial assistance through affordable loans, loan guarantees and grants.

For more information on Rural Development programs available in Blount County contact the Rural Development Area Office in Knoxville at 865-523-3338, ext. 4, toll free at (800) 342-3149 ext. 1491 or visit us online at www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn.

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